

he had learned a whole lot about a good many things—especially about the importance of the matter of propagating his own species. Here in Washington, only a few years ago, he quit building, communal style, in the vines covering such “sacred edifices” as churches; he also practically gave up nesting in trees that lined the streets and avenues in all directions. As a matter of fact, the sparrow gave up his housekeeping in any such public places.

Now this year (1920) I have given especial attention to the nesting of this species here in this city, and the interesting fact has come to my notice that the bird has not built out in plain sight anywhere. I have been unable to observe the presence of a nest within the city limits. That they are nesting in as great numbers as ever there can be no doubt; for, as the weather warms up, one may note the males courting the females as usual, and both sexes gathering and flying away with materials for nest construction. However, both males and females have become extremely secretive; and whatever place a pair selects for a nesting-site, they make more than certain that no part of the nest is allowed to stick out beyond the entrance. On several occasions I watched a bird with some nesting material in its beak, to note where it flew, and thus discover where a nest would be later on. Every time I did so, however, the bird would drop what it had; in an unconcerned manner take up something else, or fly up into a tree until I took my departure. I have not seen a House Sparrow's nest in a tree in Washington this year; while twenty-five or thirty years ago one could count as many as half a dozen in a single tree, sometimes, on any of the busiest thoroughfares.—DR. R. W. SHCFELDT, *Washington, D. C.*

Notes on the Acadian Sharp-tailed Sparrow (*Passerherbulus nelsoni subvirgatus*).—On June 12, 1920, in a small salt marsh near Bunker's Island, at the southern end of Yarmouth Harbor, Yarmouth, Nova Scotia, I found the occupied nest of a pair of Acadian Sharp-tailed Sparrows. The nest proper was a neat, round cup of fine, dry, dead grass, with some horsehair in the lining. Its foundation consisted of some small masses of “eel-grass” and roots. Its dimensions were: inside diameter, 2.5 in.; outside diameter, 4.5 in.; inside depth, 1.5 in.; outside depth, 2.375 in. It was elevated above the general surface of the marsh by being placed on the top of a low, grassy ridge, about fourteen inches high, formed from material thrown up when a ditch was dug across the marsh, many years before. During some storm a mat of dead “eel-grass” had been left on top of this ridge, and this had later been lifted by the growing marsh grass, leaving several inches between it and the ground. The nest was placed at the northwest edge of this mat, about half of the nest being under it, while the other side was sheltered and concealed by grass about six inches high. The nest was not sunk in the ground at all.

Two young Sharp-tails, partly feathered, and nearly ready to leave the nest, were in their snug home, while the dried body of a third young

bird, which evidently had died soon after hatching, lay on the front edge of the nest. The living birds had their eyes open and feathers partly covering the head, back, chin, and the sides of breast and belly. A stripe over each eye and one in the center of the crown were buffy; the rest of the upper parts were fuscous, the feathers tipped with buffy; the sides of the throat were buffy, the sides of the breast whitish, streaked with fuscous, and the sides of the belly whitish. They were still so young that, when touched, they would open wide their bright red, yellow-edged mouths.

The nest was found after I had quietly watched the parent Sparrows for about an hour, while they were bringing food to their young. Most of the food appeared to be obtained on the salt marsh, within a rod or two of the nest, but the birds visited also an upland hayfield nearby. The old birds never alighted at the nest nor took flight from it, but descended and arose at various points distant from one to two yards from their home. On one occasion one of them was observed to carry off a white sack of excrement. The male sang from time to time from a piece of driftwood on the marsh about 30 feet distant from the nest. When I was examining the nest and the young birds, the parents made no demonstration for some minutes, but later they came near and uttered chip's, much like those of Savannah Sparrows. There was no difficulty in identification, as these birds, with which I have been familiar for some ten years, differ markedly in appearance and song from Savannah Sparrows or any other birds to be found in Nova Scotia.

On June 17 I again visited this nest, found it empty, and collected it. It has since been presented to the Victoria Memorial Museum, Ottawa, Ontario. When collected, the nest was thoroughly wet, evidently as a result of having been flooded by the high spring tides then occurring, there having been a new moon on June 16, for no rain had fallen at Yarmouth in the interval between my two visits to the nest. There were, of course, spring tides about June 1, the date of the previous full moon, when the nest probably contained eggs, but these would not be as high as the spring tides of the new moon, and may not have reached the nest. There is no apparent reason, however, why the spring tides accompanying the new moon of May 18 should not have been as high as those of the new moon in June and flooded the nest-site. Probably the nest was built immediately after those spring tides subsided. It would be interesting to know if this was a mere coincidence or if these birds, when nesting in salt marshes, take into account the variations in the rise and fall of the tides, and thus, indirectly, the phases of the moon!

Mr. W. H. Moore has described (*Cat. of Can. Birds*, Macoun & Macoun, Ottawa, 1909, pp. 507-508) some nests and eggs of this subspecies from fresh-water marshes along the St. John River in New Brunswick, but, so far as I have been able to ascertain, the present is the first description of a salt marsh nest of this species, and the first definitely identified nest

of the species recorded from Nova Scotia, where these birds are common in suitable localities in the breeding season.

On June 12, a fine, bright, windy day, Acadian Sharp-tailed Sparrows frequently delivered their flight-songs all about me during the time that I remained in their marsh, from 10.00 a. m. to 4.00 p. m. When about to sing his flight-song, the male Sharp-tail rises, on fluttering wings, diagonally upward from the marsh to a height of 25 or 30 feet, uttering meanwhile a slow series of *chip's*. He then spreads his wings and, as he sails slowly downward, utters once his husky *sh-sh-sh-ulp*, then flutters downward a few feet, with frequent *chip's*, then sets his wings and sails and sings a second time, and finally, with more fluttering and more *chip's*, descends to his perch, where he continues to sing, but is silent in the intervals between songs.—HARRISON F. LEWIS, *Quebec, P. Q.*

Notable Warblers Breeding Near Aiken, S. C.—The Swainson's Warbler (*Limnothlypis swainsoni*) is known to nest abundantly along the swamps of the Savannah River near Augusta, Ga. The hills rise steeply on the South Carolina side of the river towards Aiken, eighteen miles away and six hundred feet above sea level. The surrounding country is rolling, sandy, farming land, with numerous small streams, and a few large mill ponds. The creek bottoms are generally heavily wooded and contain patches of dense tangled underbrush and cane (*Arundinaria tecta*).

We found the first Swainson's Warblers on April 23, 1920, two together in open woods near a mill pond. On and after May 7 we always heard two birds singing in this particular neighborhood, but were unable to find a nest. One of these birds sang continuously in a narrow strip of woods between a railroad and a high-road, paying no more attention to passing trains or trucks than did the Hooded Warblers or White-eyed Vireos. Everywhere the singing birds paid very little attention to our presence. It was our experience in every instance that we could locate and approach a singing bird without much difficulty, and that he would continue singing uninterruptedly.

After May 8 we found one or more Swainson's Warblers in every suitable locality; that is, in damp woods near running water or ponds where there were thick undergrowth and cane.

On May 23 we found a nest. It was on the side of an embankment, ten feet below a carriage road, and the same distance from a small stream. We were crossing the stream on a fallen log when we looked down and saw the bird sitting on her nest about four feet away. She watched us with no sign of fear, and slipped off her nest after we had been moving about for several minutes. There were three eggs in the nest, which was fastened securely in the tops of several stalks of cane bent over, so that the nest was four and a half feet from the ground. We returned the following mid-day. One bird was on the nest, and the mate soon approached, singing as he hopped leisurely along, and took a bath in the